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San Francisco, July 31, 1899.

TROPICAL EXPANSION.

Editor *NEWS LETTER:*

Sir: In "Dutch Colonizers in Malaysia" and the "Annexation of the Philippines," a pamphlet published six months ago, I set forth some of the conditions of tropical Oriental countries dominated by Europeans, specially referring to Java, and the state of the subjugated natives there who, after a long period of exaction and oppression, are gradually coming to a realization of some of their rights, and are therefore no longer fully submitting to the tyranny of their foreign masters, but are slowly emancipating themselves from the despotism of their alien rulers, and thereby making the exploitation of their lands and people a source of less yearly profit to European owners.

As one reason for my opposition to the policy of colonial expansion pursued by the present administration of the United States Government, I quoted very liberally from statistics gathered from English, Dutch and French records of colonization, and now present an epitome of these in a condensed form, to wit:

The Caucasian cannot thrive, physically, nor perform manual labor of any kind for any considerable period in the sea level tropics. It is said that in colonizing the Congo Free State nine out of every ten Europeans going there were either buried or returned home invalided within three years. The largest of the one hundred and twenty Belgian trading companies maintains a service of only seven months out of every twenty-four. In constructing the Panama railroad across the Isthmus of Darien, a human life was sacrificed for every tie that lies in the road. The outcome of our own exportation of troops to the Philippines bears out the statement that our people cannot endure the sea level tropical climate. "The strength of Anglo-Saxon civilization lies in the mental and physical activity of men, and where activity is fatal to life, the Anglo-Saxon decays, mentally, morally, physically." Even by shielding himself from every exposure he cannot many years remain in tropical countries, and no third generation survives him there. Civilians and soldiers alike succumb to the baleful effects of the enervating climate, and both yield to the unfavorable influences of eastern customs and conditions.

In Oriental colonies the Caucasian is outclassed by the hordes of skilled native artisans, mechanics, and laborers; laborers work for wages that the white man could not live on. Ten or fifteen cents a day is not a free man's scale of wages. "There is no room for free laborers, no welcome for them, and no pay. There is no chance for the American workman, but for the syndicates they offer great opportunities—for the syndicates who handle politics as an incident in business."

"For our extermination of the Indian, there is, in general, no moral justification. There is a good political excuse in it—that we could and did use their land in a better way than was possible to them. We have no such excuse in Luzon; we cannot use the land except as we use the lives of the people. Should we exterminate these people we could only replace them with Malay, Chinese or Japanese, not with our own." The maintenance of law and order at home, respect for manhood, of industrial wisdom and enterprise and commercial integrity is the true "White Man's Burden," while as now considered and illustrated in practice, it seems to be a desperate effort to force the black man to support himself and the white man too.

The Oriental tropical "colonies" (so-called) are merely military posts exercising despotic control over the natives for the benefit of the exploiters—the capitalists of the home country or Government. The exploitations of Europeans colonizing nations have always been, and will continue to be, for the benefit of the few—the high civil and military officials sent out by the home Government, and the plantation owners and rich traders. There never was a tropical country governed with any degree of success without a system of contract labor, vide Hawaiian Islands. One of the Commissioners appointed by this Government to investigate the labor and other questions at the time the Islands were annexed, called attention to the fact that the sugar and coffee interests of the Islands cannot get along without the cheap contract labor.

The prizes for colonial service under English Imperialism are not only wealth wrung from the natives, but a title and a pension. A correspondent from Manila said, "The only imperialists in all the American forces now in these Islands are to be found among the temporary Government appointees, who see coming within their grasp large fat official plums; and a large percentage of the well-paid army officers, surrounded by their large retinue of cheap servants, a la ante-bellum days in the South."

It is not true that a superior race governing an inferior one in the tropics, when the superior race cannot take with it the wives and children and create

homes there, will benefit such a race by example. It is only exploited by schemers, who stay in such countries until they make a "sack," so as to be able to return and live comfortably in their own country.

Our exports to the Philippines have not exceeded an average of $130,000 per year for twenty years past. During the year ending June 30, 1898, we exported only $127,000 worth of goods to the Philippines, while to the remainder of the world we exported $1,320,000,000 worth. They were less than 1-100 of one per cent of the total exports of this country for the year ending June 30, 1898.

Our imports from the Philippines were from $4,000,000 to $8,000,000 per annum, according to the kind of money they are valued in. These exports from the Philippines—hemp, sugar, tobacco, etc.—all bore, under Spanish rule, an export tax to defray expenses of administration, which our Constitution forbids. Moreover, all interests of value in the Philippines are already controlled by the English, Spanish, German and French, and the Chinese, of the latter of whom there are 60,000 in Luzon alone; besides the Filipinos' rights, property titles, positions of vantage, etc. We do not need the Philippines to maintain the prestige of our commerce in the Orient. Commercial growth does not depend on territorial expansion. The cant that "trade follows the flag" is a shallow sophistry. Trade is determined by fitness, price and transportation, all of which may be summed up in the one word—Price.

The four leading colonizing nations, Great Britain, Germany, France and Spain, in the five years, 1893–97 inclusive, as compared with the similar preceding period, lost over 1500 million dollars of their export trade, while the United States, without colonies and a very limited tonnage, increased its export trade with foreign markets over 270 million dollars. And it is a surprising fact that the export trade of Great Britain with her colonies, protectorates and spheres of influence, decreased more than 200 million dollars in this same time. This should afford conclusive evidence that the commerce of the world has inexorable laws of its own.

In the pursuit of glory, expansion, benevolent assimilation, or other high sounding terms, in reality a war of extermination of the most indefensible character in the records of civilization, we are trying to hold a large and active population by force, without visible plan or purpose, or reason for so doing. Thousands of lives have been sacrificed, millions of property destroyed and millions of money expended in this unnecessary invasion of an unoffending people's rights. There is no way better calculated to misinterpret benevolent motives and intentions than weapons of war. Nobody ever gets any hint of benevolent intentions from such things.

And yet, despite all the evidence confirming these facts, those who protest against this distressing waste of life, property, treasure, and against the violation of the principles of our government, are glibly disparaged for "treason," "sedition." As a writer in the Dial of July 16th very pertinently says:

"Not since the days of the assault in the United States Congress on John Quincy Adams and Joshua Giddings for their grand defense of the sacred right of petition, has the public in this country been so swayed by ignorant and servile intolerance as during the past six months. The press of the country, with a few honorable exceptions, has worked itself into such a state of mind as would be gratefully appreciated by a Cæsar or a Napoleon, and a state of public opinion has been produced which it requires considerable courage to question."

And this has been peculiarly the case on the Pacific Coast, where the material advantages of supplying an army in the Philippines have been eagerly

seized upon, while the consequent burdens of administration to the people at large not yet realized; but the day of reckoning will come. The hopes of most of those who expect to gain something—money, glory, prestige—will be disappointed. "The cost of conquest and maintenance in life and gold is in grotesque excess of any possible advantage to trade or civilization."

Benjamin Franklin has an established reputation for "horse sense" and he observed: "To me it seems that neither the obtaining or retaining of any trade, however valuable soever, is an object for which men may justly spill each other's blood; that the true and sure means of extending commerce is the goodness and cheapness of commodities; and that the profit of no trade can be equal to the expense of compelling it and of holding it by fleets and armies."

We had but just emerged from a period of industrial and financial crisis and depression during which fifty thousand miles of railroad had been in the hands of receivers, and twelve hundred banks had failed, when, without deliberation or reason, we plunged into a war with Spain, followed it up by a wild shout for Expansion, and proceeded to inaugurate a war upon the Filipinos, a people whose only offending (in-so-far as the United States was concerned) has been that they, like Americans, desire liberty, to whom we presented an ultimatum of submission or ruin. One of the Paris Peace Commissioners has added that to accord freedom and citizenship would be to demonstrate ourselves the most imbecile of all Time's offspring.

Gracious God! Is it possible that one short century of material prosperity has so completely deadened our conscience and hearts to the imperishable principles that sustained our forefathers in the struggle for the same liberty that the brave and devoted Filipinos strive for, and have striven for years and years?

Can any conscientious man or woman deliberately aver that our course has been justifiable? No. It is not possible, and any such averment could not justify the wrongs we are perpetrating. Our attitude is excused by the plea "we are in it and cannot back out"—the ethics of a dog fight—and the reason of a bull in a China shop—and a fight too, in which the disparity between contestants is as ten to one. To which I remark, "It's never too late to mend."

"The devils of national vainglory, of imperial expansion, and of the passion of robbing and crowing over victims, are simply the devils of individual vainglory, the devils of business and domestic ambition and rivalry." "There is no sense in the American people dealing with the Filipinos as though they were uncivilized barbarians who had no right to aspire to a separate national existence. Thus far we have sent them nothing but the sword. The policy of crushing first and conciliating afterwards is replete with the brutality and impolicy of war." The one thing denied the Filipinos by the government of this country is the one single thing that George III. wanted to withhold from our forefathers—LIBERTY! WILLIAM PITT, EARL CHATHAM, DECLARED IN PARLIAMENT: "IT IS SAID THE AMERICAN COLONIES INTEND TO REBEL. I HOPE THEY MAY; I AM DELIGHTED TO HEAR THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO DO SO."

Is it not time the true facts were known, and that something rational—humane—be done—some course of Christian action be defined? "There is nothing so kingly as kindness and nothing so royal as truth."

JOHN J. VALENTINE.